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(54) IMMERSION DISTANCE HOLDING DEVICE

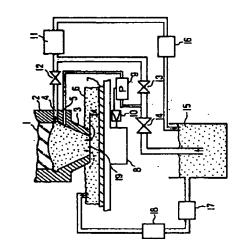
(57) Abstract:

PURPOSE: To prevent the resolving power of an optical system from decreasing by equipping a control system with a reference device which has flow rate resistance similar to that of the opening part of a detector and a suction path with flow rate resistance similar to that of a suction path for liquid from the detector.

CONSTITUTION: An amplification control circuit 10 drives a sample table 8 so that the output of a piezoelectric transducer 9, i.e. pressure in the detector 3 is constant. When the suction pressure of a suction source 11 fluctuates, the detected pressure in the detector 3 also varies to cause malfunction apparently as if an interval (h) were varied. For this purpose, the reference device which has a restrictor 14 with flow rate resistance similar to flow rate resistance depending upon the interval between the detector opening part 19 and a sample 17 and a restrictor 13 similar to a restrictor 12 is coupled with the suction source 11. Consequently, the variation with the pressure difference between the detected pressure and reference pressure is eliminated and the piezoelectric transducer 9 transduces this pressure difference into an electric signal; and the amplification control circuit 10 drives the sample table so that its output value is constant.

Therefore, the malfunction of the control system is eliminated and a decrease in the resolving power of the optical system is prevented.

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(54) LIQUID IMMERS	ON DISTANCE HOLDING	APPARATUS	
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Specification

1. Title of the Invention

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Liquid Immersion Distance Holding Apparatus

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2. Scope of Patent Claims

- (1) A liquid immersion distance holding apparatus that positions and holds a sample at the focus position of an optical system in an optical apparatus for observing the sample in a liquid or projecting an image to the sample in a liquid; characterized in that it is comprised by being provided with a detection system including a detector that has nearly the same shape as the optical path between the member of the optical system and the sample at the lower end part of the lens barrel of the optical system and a suction system path or a supply system path that sucks in or supplies the liquid from the opening part of the detector by means of a suction source or supply source, a piezoelectric transducer that detects pressure within the detector that corresponds to the distance between the detector and the sample and outputs an electrical signal, and a movement control mechanism that positions and holds the sample at the focus position using the output of the piezoelectric transducer.
- (2) A liquid immersion distance holding apparatus described in Claim 1; wherein the detection system comprises a reference unit that has a flow rate resistance equivalent to that of the opening part of the detector and that has a suction system path or a supply system path with flow rate resistance equivalent to that of the suction system path or the supply system path for the liquid from the detector, and the movement control mechanism comprises an amplification control circuit that inputs the output of the pressure transducer, and drive control of the movement control mechanism is performed so that the reference unit and the detector are connected to the same suction source and the pressure differential of the reference pressure within the reference unit and the detection pressure within the detector becomes a constant value.

(3) A liquid immersion distance holding apparatus described in Claim 2; wherein the amplification control circuit has a configuration with which is possible to apply a prescribed voltage from an external circuit, and it is possible to drive the movement control mechanism by means of the applied voltage, and it is possible to set the sample at the desired position.

3. Detailed Explanation of the Invention

The present invention relates to a liquid immersion distance holding apparatus for performing positioning and holding of the sample in a liquid immersion type optical apparatus and particularly to a distance holding apparatus that is optimal for the autofocusing of exposure apparatuses that project a pattern to a sample in a liquid.

In an optical apparatus for observing or projecting a pattern using an optical lens, increasing the numerical aperture NA is well known as a technique of improving the resolution of the objective lens. A known technique thereof is interposing a liquid to increase the refractive index of the medium between the objective lens and the sample. Liquid immersion type microscopes have been commercialized as optical apparatuses that use this technique. The focusing of liquid immersion type microscopes with respect to a sample involves nothing more than performing adjustment visually, and means for automatically focusing have not been established.

In the case of microscopes, adjustment is performed visually, and no obstructions are produced, but high accuracy and high speed automatic focusing is in demand particularly in exposure apparatuses used in manufacturing processes such as those of semiconductor integrated circuits (hereunder, referred to simply as exposure apparatuses).

In addition, with existing liquid immersion type microscopes, there have been drawbacks in that easy removal of bubbles that have adhered to the front end of the objective lens is problematic, and the resolving power of the optical system decreases.

The purpose of the present invention is to provide, in an optical apparatus for observing a sample in a liquid or projecting a pattern to a sample, an apparatus that performs positioning and holding of the sample at that focus position automatically and with high accuracy while making it possible to easily remove bubbles that have adhered to the objective lens.

The inventors of the present application have developed a means of immersing a sample to increase resolving power in exposure apparatuses and have already applied for a patent (Patent Application No. 56-37977). In addition, a means for improving resolving power in detecting a pattern on a sample has been developed, and a patent application (Patent Application No. 57-84784) has been made. An apparatus that automatically focuses a large diameter lens (objective lens) used in these liquid immersion type exposure apparatuses is needed, and the present invention has been devised to resolve this.

The present invention will be explained in detail below using embodiments.

FIG. 1 is a drawing that explains the configuration of an embodiment of an apparatus of the present invention. In the drawing, 1 is an optical member (objective lens) of the optical apparatus (exposure apparatus), 2 is a lens barrel, 3 is a detector provided at the lower end of the lens barrel 2, 4 is a liquid suction hole, 5 is a pressure detection hole provided on the detector 3, 6 is the liquid for immersion, 7 is a sample, 8 is a sample platform that includes a drive apparatus, 9 is a piezoelectric transducer that converts the detected pressure to electrical signals and outputs them, 10 is an amplification control circuit, 11 is a liquid suction source, 12, 13 and 14 are restrictors that adjusts the flow rate of the liquid, 15 is a liquid reservoir, 16 is a filter, 17 is a suction source for supply of the liquid 6, 18 is a filter, and 19 is an opening part of the detector 3.

The detector 3 is made to be nearly the same shape as the space formed in the optical path between the objective lens or the optical member 1 of the exposure apparatus and the sample 7, and it is connected to the lower end of the lens barrel 2. Note that the reason that the structure of the detector 3 is made nearly the same as that of the optical path of the optical system is to improve the response characteristic when controlling the position of the sample platform. The objective lens used in a common exposure apparatus is large with an aperture diameter of 30 mm\$\phi\$ or more and an image forming area of 15 mm\$\phi\$ or more, and a truncated cone shaped space defined by these two diameters becomes the optical path, which takes up considerable volume. The response characteristic is improved by keeping this volume to a necessary minimum.

The sample 7 is secured onto a sample platform 8 that is able to move in the optical axis direction of the optical system, and the surface of the sample 7, which has been coated with a photosensitive material, is covered by a liquid 6 for liquid immersion.

For the structure of the sample platform 8, it is possible to use a well known moving mechanism that is able to move in the optical axis direction.

A suction hole 4 is provided at the upper corner of the detector 3, and it is connected to a suction source 11 via a restrictor 12, which is a flow rate resistance element, via a pipe. Here, when the suction source 11 is operated, the interior of the detector 3 comes to have negative pressure, and the liquid 6 flows in from the opening part 19 of

the detector. The liquid that has flowed in is sent to the liquid reservoir 15 via the suction source 11 and filter 16. When the suction source 11 is operated at a constant pressure, the pressure of the interior of the detector 3 changes according to the size of the interval h of the detector 3 and the sample 7. For example, when the interval h becomes small, the absolute value of the negative pressure value inside the detector 3 becomes large. Conversely, when the interval h becomes large, the absolute value of the negative pressure value becomes small. In this way, the pressure of the interior of the detector 3 corresponds to the interval h. A pressure detection hole 5 is provided on the detector 3, and it is connected to the piezoelectric transducer 9 by means of a pipe. The piezoelectric transducer 9 converts pressure to electrical signals and is connected to a drive system attached to the sample platform 8 via the amplification control circuit 10. The amplification control circuit 10 drives the sample platform 8 so that the output of the piezoelectric transducer 9 becomes constant, specifically, so that the pressure within the detector 3 (that is, the interval h) becomes a constant value.

On the other hand, when the suction pressure of the suction source 11 fluctuates, the detection pressure within the detector 3 also fluctuates, and malfunction occurs as if the interval h has changed. To eliminate this kind of pressure fluctuation of the suction source, a reference unit is provided in the control system of this embodiment. The reference unit is configured to comprise a restrictor 14 that has a flow rate resistance that is equivalent to the flow rate resistance formed in the interval of the opening part 19 of the detector 19 and the sample 7 and a restrictor 13 that is equivalent to restrictor 12, and it is connected to the suction source 11. One end of restrictor 14 immerses that opening part in the liquid of the liquid reservoir 15, and the pressure between the other end of restrictor 14 and restrictor 13 is connected to the piezoelectric transducer 9 as a reference pressure via a pipe. The other end of restrictor 13 is connected to the suction source 11. Since the reference unit and the detector have the same suction source, pressure fluctuation of the suction source 11 is equivalently transferred, so fluctuation with respect to the pressure differential of the detection pressure and the reference pressure is eliminated. In this case, the piezoelectric transducer 9 electrically converts this pressure differential of the detection pressure and the reference pressure. In addition, the amplification control circuit 10 drives and controls the sample platform 8 so that the output value from the piezoelectric transducer 9, that is, the pressure differential, becomes constant. When a system of controlling the constant pressure differential of the detection pressure and the reference pressure so that it becomes zero is adopted, it becomes easy to correct the drift of the amplification control circuit 10. Specifically, the circuit should be corrected so that the output of the amplification control circuit 10 becomes zero in a status in which the suction source 11 is not operated.

In addition, when it is made possible to apply a constant voltage to the amplification control circuit 10 by means of an external circuit, it is also possible to provide the desired offset to the position of the sample platform. Details on the above two circuits are discussed in, for example, Utility Model Application No. 56-181162 applied for by the inventors of this application, and they can be applied to the present invention in the same way.

The liquid 6 on the sample 7 is supplied in an appropriate amount via an appropriate suction source 17 and filter 18 from the liquid reservoir 15, and this is done in a status such that the front end of the detector 3 is immersed.

In an apparatus of the present invention that is configured and operates as discussed above, autofocusing becomes possible by setting the interval h only one time so that the surface of the sample comes to the focus position of the optical system of the liquid immersion type exposure apparatus.

A feature in implementing the present invention is that the liquid is sucked in from the opening part 19 of the detector 3. This is because this is extremely effective in removing bubbles that have adhered within the detector 3 and to the lower part of the optical member 1. Even in a method substituting the suction source 11 with a supply source and expelling the liquid from the detector, pressure that corresponds to the interval h can be detected, but the use of a suction source is desirable for removing bubbles produced in the detector. Therefore, it is necessary to perform suction so that disturbance of the optical path by the bubbles is eliminated in such cases as when the optical member is at the top as in the embodiment, that is, in the case of a structure in which there is blockage by bubbles that have occurred in the liquid.

In this embodiment, in the case of an opening part 19 of the detector with a diameter of 6 mm ϕ and an interval h of 250 μ m, H₂O is used as the liquid, and 2.5 mmAq/ μ m is obtained as the detection sensitivity of the position of the sample at a detection pressure of -1200 mmAq (gauge pressure) and a flow rate of 0.6 l/min. In cases where there is this detection sensitivity, it has been found that positioning and holding of the sample at an accuracy of approximately $\pm 0.1~\mu$ m is automatically possible.

Note that the data values indicated in the above embodiment are nothing more than examples, and it is thought to be easy to appropriately change them according to the viscosity of the liquid and the dimensions of the optical path of the objective lens.

In addition, the apparatus of the present invention is able to circulate liquid for liquid immersion, so it is also capable of filtering and temperature regulation of the liquid for liquid immersion and switching and supplying of two or more types of liquid.

In addition, the apparatus of the present invention can, of course, be broadly applied to not only exposure apparatuses but to apparatuses that require highly accurate positioning and holding of a distance in a liquid.

As explained above, for the apparatus of the present invention, in a liquid immersion type optical apparatus, it is possible to position and hold the position of the sample automatically and with high accuracy at the prescribed focus position of the optical system, and it is possible to easily remove bubbles that have adhered to the objective lens, so it is possible to prevent a decrease in the resolving power of the optical system.

4. Brief Explanation of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a drawing that explains the configuration of an embodiment of the apparatus of the present invention.

- 1 optical member (objective lens)
- 2 lens barrel
- 3 detector
- 4 liquid suction hole
- 5 pressure detection hole
- 6 liquid for liquid immersion
- 7 sample
- 8 sample platform
- 9 piezoelectric transducer
- 10 amplification control circuit
- 11 suction source
- 12, 13, 14 restrictor
- 15 liquid reservoir
- 16 filter
- 17 suction source for liquid supply
- 18 filter
- 19 opening part of detector

continued from page 1

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匈液浸距離保持装置

②特 願 昭57-129065

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ツリー 組 中

- 1. 発明の名称 放浸距離保持装置
- 2. 特許請求の範囲

(2) 前記検出系は、前記検出器の開口部と同等の流量抵抗を有しかつ該検出器からの液体の吸引

系路または供給系路と同等の流量抵抗の吸引系路または供給系路を有する参照器を具備し、前記移動制御機構は、前記圧力変換器の出力を入力する増幅制御回路を備え、上記参照器と検出器とを同一の吸引源に接続し、該参照器内の参照圧力とを同後出器内の検出圧力との圧力差が一定の値となるように上記移動制御機構を駆動制御するものである特許請求の範囲第1項記載の液浸距離保持装置

(3) 前記增報制御回路は、所定の電圧を外部回路から付加することが可能な構成とし、該付加電圧により前記移動制御機構を駆動せしめ試料を所望の位置に設定可能ならしめたものである特許請求の範囲第2項記載の液浸距離保持装置。

3. 発明の詳細な説明

本発明は、液浸型光学装置における試料の位置 決め、保持を行なうための液浸距離保持装置に関 するもので、特に液中の試料にパターンを投影す る露光装置の自動無点合わせに好適な距離保持装 置に関するものである。

光学レンズを用いてパターンを観察したり、投

形したりする光学装置において、対物レンズの解像力を向上させる手法として、関ロ数 NA を高めることは公知である。その手法として対物レンズと試料との間の媒体物の屈折率を高めるため、液体を介在させることが知られている。この手法を用いた光学装置としては液浸型顕微鏡が製品化されている。液浸型顕微鏡の試料に対する焦点合わせは、目視による調整が行なわれているにすぎず自動的に合無点する手段は確立されていない。

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顕微鏡の場合は、目視により調整することで支 除をきたさないが、露光装置、特に半導体集積回 路等の製造工程で川いられる露光装置(以下単に 露光装置という。)では高速高精度に自動的に無 点合わせを行なりことが要求されてくる。

また既存の液浸潤顕微鏡では、対物レンズの先端に付着した気心を彩易に除去することが難しく、 光学系の解像力を低下させてしまう欠点があった。

本発明の目的は、液中にある試料を観察したり、 試料にパターンを投影したりする光学装置におい て、その焦点位置に試料を高精度に自動的に位置 決め保持するとともに、対物レンズに付着した気 泡を容易に除去することを可能ならしめた装置を 提供することにある。

本額の発明者らは、露光装置において、解像力をあげるため試料を液浸にする手段を開発してされり、既に特許出額(特顯昭 56 - 37977 号)されている。また、試料上のパターンを検出するとでの解像力を向上させる手段が開発され、特許のはではありまれている。これにの、放浸型の露光装置に用いられている大口径レンズ(対物レンズ)の焦点を自動的に合わせる装置が必要となっており、本発明はそれを解決するためになされたものである。

以下、本発明を実施例によって詳細に説明する。 第1図は本発明の装置の一実施例の構成説明図 である。図において、1は光学装置(露光装置) の光学部材(対物レンズ)、2はレンズ鏡簡、3 はレンズ鏡簡2の下端に設けられた検出器、4は 液体の吸引孔、5は検出器3に設けられた圧力検 出孔、6は液浸用の液体、7は試料、8は駆動装

置を含む試料台、9 は検出した圧力を電気信号に 変換して出力する圧電変換器、1 B は増幅制御回 路、11 は液体の吸引源、12, 13, 14 は液体 の流量を調整する絞り、15 は液溜器、16 はフィ ルタ、17 は液体6 の供給用吸引源、18 はフィ ルタ、19 は検出器3の開口部である。

検出器 3 は露光装置の対物レンズあるないは光学部材 1 と試料 7 との間の光路で形成される空間とほぼ同一形状に作られ、レンズ鏡筒 2 の構造を光学系の光路とほぼ同一としている理由は、試料台のを置を制御する際の応答特性を良くするためである。 通常の露光装置に用いられる対物レンズは 開口をが 3 0 mm が 15 mm が 15 mm が 15 mm が 15 mm が 2 と大きく、この2つの径で形作られる内錐を台状の空間が光路となり、かなりの容積を占める。この容積を必要最小限とするととで応答特性が向上す

試料7は光学系の光軸方向に可動な試料台8の 上に固定され、感光材の塗布された試料7の表面 は液浸用の液体もで被われている。

試料台8の構造は光軸方向に可動である公知の 移動手段を使用できる。

検出器3の上方隅には吸引孔4が設けられ、管 により流量抵抗要素である絞り 12 を経て、吸引 原 11 に接続している。ととで吸引原 11 を作動 すると検出器3の内部が負の圧力となり、液体6 が検出器の開口部 19 より流入する。流入した液 体は、吸引源 11 とフィルタ 16 を経て液溜器 15 に送られる。一定の圧力で吸引頭 11 を作動さ せると、検出器3の内部の圧力は、検出器3と財 . 料 7 との間隔 h の大きさに応じて変化する。例え ば間隔hが小さくなると、検出器3内の負の圧力 値の絶対値が大きくなる。反対に間隔りが大きく たると負の圧力値の絶対値は小さくなる。とのよ うに検出器3の内部の圧力は間隔りに見合ったも のとなる。検出器3には圧力検出孔5が設けられ、 管により圧電変換器9に接続している。圧電変換 器9は圧力を電気信号に変換して増幅制御回路 10 を経て、試料台8に付設されている駆動系に

接続されている。 均幅制御回路 10 は圧電変換器 9 の出力が一定、すなわち検出器 3 内の圧力(すなわち間隙 h)が一定値となるように試料台 8 を駆動させる。

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一方、吸引源 11 の吸引圧力が変動すると検出 器 3 内の検出圧力も変動し、見かけ上間隔 h が変 わったかのように似動作してしまう。このような 吸引家の圧力変励を除去するため、本実施例の割 御系では参照器を設けてある。参照器は、検出器 闘口部 19 と試料 7 との関隔で形成される流量抵: 抗と同等の流量抵抗を有する絞り 14 および絞り 12と同等の絞り13を備えて構成され、吸引源 11 に継がっている。 絞り 14 の一端は液溜器 15 の液中にその開口部を受しており、絞り 14 の他 端と絞り 13 との間の圧力は管により参照圧とし て圧電変換器9につながっている。絞り 13 の他 端は吸引源 11 に継がっている。参照器と検出器 は吸引旅を同一とするため、吸引源 11 の圧力変 動が同等に伝わるため、検出圧と参照圧の圧力差 に対する変動がなくなる。この場合圧電変換器9

はこの検出圧と参照圧の圧力差を電気変換することになる。また増幅制御回路 10 は圧電変換器 9 からの出力値すなわち上配圧力差が一定になるように試料台 8 を駆動制御する。

検出圧と参照圧の一定の圧力差を零化するように制御させる方式をとると、増幅制御回路 10 のドリフトを補正することが容易となる。すなわち吸引源 11 を動作させない状態で増幅制御回路 10 の出力が零となるように回路を補正すれば良いことになる。

また増幅制御回路 10 化一定の電圧を外部回路 によって付加できるようにしておくと、 試料台の 位置に任意のオフセットを与えることもできる。 上記の2通りの回路の詳細については、 例えば本 顧の発明者らが出願している実顧昭 56 - 181162 号に述べられており、 本発明にも同様に適用する ことができる。

試料7上の液体6は液溜器15から適当な吸引 源17とフィルタ18を経て適量だけ供給され、 検出器3の先端が浸る状態になされている。

以上述べたように構成され動作する本発明の装置では、液浸型露光装置の光学系の合無点位置に 試料面が来るように、一度だけ間隔 h を設定する ととで、自動焦点合わせが可能となる。

本実施例において、検出器の開口部 19 の径 6 mm が、 間隙 h 250 μm の場合に、液体として H₂O を用いて、検出圧 - 1200 mm Aq (ゲージ圧), 死量 0.6 8/min で、試料の位置の検出感

度として 2.5 mm Λq / μm が得られている。 この 検出感度がある場合には ± 0.1 μm 程度の精度で 試料の位置決め保持が自動的にできることが認め られている。

なお、上記実施例に示したデータ値は一例にす ぎず、液体の粘度、対物レンズの光路寸法等に応 して適宜変わりうることは容易に考えられる。

また、本発明の装置は、液浸用液体を循環させることができるため、液浸用液体のフィルタリングや温度調整さらには2種類以上の液体を切り換えて供給することも可能である。

また、本発明の装置は単に露光装置のみならす。 液中で距離を高精度に位置決め、保持することを 必要とする装置に広く応用できることは言うまで もないことである。

以上説明したように、本発明の装置によれば、 液浸型の光学装置において、試料の位置を光学系 の所定の合無点位置に自動的に高精度に位置決め ・保持することが可能になり、しかも対物レンズ に付着する気泡を容易に除去することができるの で、光学系の解像力低下を防止することが可能に

4. 図面の簡単な説明

第1図は本発明の装配の一実施例の構成説明図

1 … 光学部材(対物レンズ)

・2 …レンズ鏡筒

3 … 検出器

4…液体の吸引孔

5 … 圧 力 検 出 孔

6…被浸用の液体

7 … 試料

8 … 試料台

9 … 压電変換器

10…增幅制御回路

11…吸引源

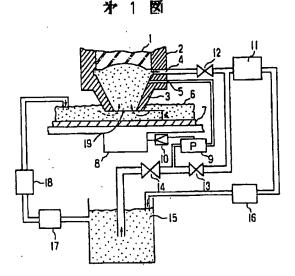
12, 13, 14…故り 15…液溜器

17…被体供給用吸引源。

18 ... フィルタ

19…検出器の開口部

代理人弁理士 中村純之助



第1頁の続き

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特許法第17条の2の規定による補正の掲載

昭和 57 年特許願第 129065 号 (特別昭 59-19912 号, 昭和 59 年 2月 1日発行 公開特許公報 59-200 号掲載) については特許法第17条の2の規定による補正があったので下記のとおり掲載する。 6 (2)

Int. C1.	識別記号	庁内整理番 ^号		
G02B 7/11 G01N 21/01 G02B 21/00		7 4 0 3 - 2 H 7 4 5 8 - 2 G 8 7 0 8 - 2 H		

平成 1.10.27 Nf 手 被 補 正 書(自発)

平成 1年 7月25 E

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特許庁長官 段

1.事件の表示 昭和57年特許顧第129065号

2. 発明の名称 被浸距離保持装置

3. 補正をする者

事件との関係 特許出願人

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5. 補正の対象 明細書の発明の詳細な説明の個

6. 補正の内容 添付別紙のとおり



補正の内容

- (1) 明細書第4頁第6行目の特顯昭56-379 77号を特開昭57-153433号公報に補正する。
- (2)明細書第4頁第9行目の特顧昭57-84784号を特開昭58-202448号公報に補正する。
- (3) 明細審第8頁第15行~第16月の実際昭 56-181162号を実開昭58-85338 号公報に補正する。